

Secretary's report 2021

As you will know and understand this report is by 2 authors, roughly half each in time served.

We have seen 66 Marine Applications this year at the time of writing. We objected strongly to one, the proposed construction of freshwater tanks in the bay at Aros within Tobermory Harbour. These were to be fed from a dam in the burn which discharges into the harbour there. The purpose of the tanks is said to be to enable well ships loaded with lice infested salmon to pump the salmon through the freshwater and hence free them of lice. We had no objection to the concept but only to its location. The basis of our objection was that an established anchorage would be lost or severely curtailed and, if space to anchor remained, the anchorage might well be untenable as the well ships work 24 hours, would be noisy and necessarily exhibit bright lights. We observed there were many other burns on Mull which could serve this need thus the anchorage need not be sacrificed. There were a number of other objectors and a decision has not yet been made.

Rather more than 1/3 of the applications were for renewal of licences particularly for fish, shellfish and algal (aka seaweed) farms in established positions.

There has been one interesting development which got considerable negative publicity. A farmer on Luing, who kept cattle on Torsa, constructed a causeway above the LW mark to allow better husbandry of the cattle. He believed he was able to do so but he also closed a navigable channel much used by kayakers. Marine Scotland sent an investigative team to establish the how, when, where and the farmer has now agreed to restore the site to its original state. Great was the outcry from this event!

On a positive note, our attention was drawn to a hazard in L Ailort. As you emerge from the skerries at the mouth you are confronted by an established fish farm with little evidence of its limits. With the help of Crown Estate Scotland we have, we hope, persuaded the owner to buoy its 'clean' side and this will greatly ease pilotage in this tricky entrance. Again, with help from CE, the owner of the water pipe cunningly laid close to Crinan sea lock and a snare for anchors has been persuaded to relay it in an acceptable position.

A consequence of Covid has been a significant increase in the number of visitors from southern parts of the UK and all the boatyards have been busy as a result of this. No doubt many moorings associations may have been affected by this too not least as there has been a significant increase in the number of boat owners seeking to winter their craft in our region.

WHAM has updated the membership database and increased our contributions from business partners. The website has been updated to include a section naming relevant contractors who service moorings.

WHAM has had representation as the Crown Estate Scotland asset transfer opportunity has been shaped and engaged with the MARPAMM marine protected areas programme.

We have received several enquiries about moorings in the West Highland area and these have been accommodated by the relevant Mooring Associations.